

Own Your Future

Long Term Care Planning: **Advance Care Planning**

Title Graphic: Advanced Care Planning

Narrator:

Putting your legal affairs in order will give you peace of mind and make sure your wishes are followed. Think about what you want while you have the time to think through your options clearly. Although matters of aging are difficult to think about, establishing legal direction will put your mind at ease.

Judy Peres, Clinical Social Worker, Long Term Care Expert Consultant:

We're very much a death-denying culture and we like to avoid the topic of what is going to happen to us at the end. And yet it's something that we all need to face because despite being the baby boomers and taking good care of ourselves, we're now just seeing the tip of the iceberg as we start to care for our parents.

And one of the things we need to do in particular that we don't do, is really address our concerns of our care near the end of life. We need to think through what we want and how we want our end of life to be. And how we want to prepare for such occasions when we're no longer able to make decisions for ourselves.

Narrator:

First, it's important to review all legal documents that are more than 5 years old and make sure they still express your wishes and meet your needs. Also make sure you have a Living Will.

A Living Will, or Advance Medical Directive allows you to state what you want for your own medical care if you are unable to make decisions for yourself. You want to choose the people you trust to help make decisions on your behalf when the time is right.

Judy Peres:

You must have a conversation with the person that you choose to be a proxy. Because if we don't have somebody who can make the decisions for us when we're no longer able to make the decisions, then we're not having our wishes followed. And so really more important than having a living will is to name a loved one or somebody that you're close to that can carry out your wishes near the end of life.

Perhaps we don't want to have tube feeding, perhaps we don't want to be on a respirator, but we give instructions to say what we want. We might want to choose to have the highest technology that's available for us, near the end of life. And we can instruct in both ways during that dialogue and that written piece of paper. If you don't have a living will, many of the states will look for surrogacy, next of kin and it's a state-by-state situation in terms of where they would turn if you don't have a living will, so it would be dictated by the laws in your particular state. And then that person in your stead would make those decisions for you but the key problem with that is that the person would then be making those decisions without knowing what your wishes were.

And so until we really get clarity on that, we're not going to be able to have the kind of end of life that we want. It's an opportunity to take control of how you want your life to be and the medical care that you want to receive. And most of us want to die at home, surrounded by friends and not in pain.

It is a wake-up call for us that we need to be thinking about that for ourselves. We've had less children than our parents have had and so it's going to be more important for us to have done this planning even than our parents have done.

Graphic:

Establish Your Legal Direction

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